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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0689

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2816

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 3319

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1161

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1251

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4036

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0615

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1967

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 8193

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 5093

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 004742

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DEPT FOR P, EAP, EAP/MLS, IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV TH

SUBJECT: SURAKIART ON HIS UNSYG CANDIDACY

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RALPH L. BOYCE. REASON 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary. In a lunch meeting on August 3, Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai briefly explained to Ambassador the message he hopes to deliver next week in his conversation with Under Secretary Burns. In a last ditch effort to boost his candidacy, Surakiart plans to highlight the quiet, but effective, role that he and Thailand have played in supporting the United States. End Summary.

STRAW POLL, WHAT STRAW POLL?

¶2. (C) DPM Surakiart's relentless crusade to replace UNSYG Kofi Annan continues undaunted despite the shaky results of the July 24 UN Security Council straw poll where Surakiart reportedly received seven votes of encouragement, three votes of discouragement and five votes of no opinion, finishing third in a field of four. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) officials interpreted these totals as signs that Surakiart remains a serious candidate for the top job, even as some media outlets have called for the DPM to abandon his efforts after this major "snub." Indeed, both Surakiart supporters and detractors have combed every statement made by UN member states on the UNSYG selection process as "proof" of their position.

I WANNA BE A FRIEND OF YOURS.. AND A LITTLE BIT MORE

¶3. (C) During lunch Surakiart said that his main pitch to U/S Burns will be to remind him of the many quiet ways that Thailand (read: Surakiart) has been a faithful ally of the US. Among other things, he will mention the RTG's willingness to send troops to both Afghanistan and Iraq even given the problems in Southern Thailand; the RTG decision to sign an Article 98 agreement; and other areas in which the Thai have quietly cooperated with the USG in counter-terrorism efforts. (Note: Surakiart will decline to mention his initial opposition, when he was Foreign Minister, to authorizing the U.S. military to deploy its humanitarian relief mission out of Utapao in December 2004 following the Indian Ocean tsunami. It was PM Thaksin who gave the U.S. the green light. End note.)

¶4. (C) Surakiart reiterated his belief that the US should play a strong leadership role at the UN. He said that if he were to become UNSYG, he could be counted on to take US

interests into account.

¶5. (C) Comment: Surakiart was quick to point out that he finished third, not fourth, in the UNSC straw poll. He shows absolutely no signs of reconsidering his candidacy and will maintain that he remains the firm ASEAN consensus candidate.
BOYCE